

Patent Application No. 09/428,836
Attorney Docket No. 81800.0011

REMARKS:

Applicant appreciates the thorough examination of the application that is reflected in the Office Action dated April 8, 2003. Claim 4 was objected to since the limitation "lease" appearing therein should read "least." Claim 4 has been amended to correct this typographical error. Claims 1-3 and 12-14 have been cancelled without prejudice. New claims 15-18 are added by this amendment. Claims 4-11 and 15-18 are pending in the application.

Reexamination and reconsideration of the application, as amended, are respectfully requested.

Art Based Rejections

Claims 4-11 and 31-34 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Takimoto (U.S.P.N. 6, 202, 092) further in view of Reilly (U.S.P.N. 6, 502, 147).

Applicant respectfully traverses these rejections for at least the following reasons. Independent claim 4 relates to a network printer which is connected to a network and performs printing based on printing requests from clients also connected to the network. Independent claim 4 requires:

a plurality of paper supply means;
designating means for designating at least one client or job for at least one of the plurality of paper supply means such that one paper supply means is dedicated for one client or job; and
printing means for accepting only printing requests from the client(s) or for the job(s) designated by the designating means, and for performing printing according to the accepted request(s) using the respective dedicated paper supply means. (Emphasis added.)

The Takimoto reference relates to a print system that manages the security of a printer shared on a network. At col. 4, line 4-6, the Takimoto reference discusses that:

The security validating portion 22b sends the result of analysis by the print request analyzing portion 22a to the statistical information managing portion 22d, which acquires information with regard to the user from a security data base maintained in the file device 23. The security validating portion 22b compares the result of analysis by the print request analyzing portion 22a with the information pertaining to the user, and, if requirements for printing are not satisfied, rejects the print request. In that case, the security validating portion 22b transfers an error message to the client computer 1 via the network drivers 21 and 12 and informs the user of the error message.

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On the other hand, if requirements for printing are satisfied, the drawing processing portion 22e carries out print processing and a printer 3 prints the requested pages. When the printer 3 prints the pages, the statistical information managing portion 22d adds the number of printed pages to the current total for the type of paper used and the current total for the number of times special printing functions have been used, as appropriate. The updated security data base is stored on the file device 23.

The security validating portion 22b determines whether the user ID inputted from the interface 22c for a manager is registered as a manager in the security data base or not. If the security validating portion 22b validates authority to the user, the user is authorized to read and modify the security data base.

If the user is authorized to read and modify the data base, the statistical information managing portion 22d acquires information with respect to all users from the data base on the file device 23, and outputs the data to the interface 22c for a manager via the security validating portion 22b or to the printer 3 via the drawing processing portion 22e.

When a user with management authority modifies the information with respect to all users in the security data base via interface 22c, the results are sent from the security validating portion 22b to the statistical information managing portion 22d to be stored in the security data base. (Emphasis added.)

Applicant submits that the Takimoto reference does not teach or suggest “printing means for accepting only printing requests from the client(s) or for the job(s) designated by the designating means, and for performing printing according to the accepted request(s) using the respective dedicated paper supply means,” as required by claims 4 and 8. The security validating portion 226 does not correspond to the designating means. Moreover, the concept of a dedicated paper supply is not disclosed in Takimoto. Applicant further submits that the Reilly reference is also deficient in this regard.

Moreover, in rejecting claim 4, the Examiner alleges that Reilly discloses “designating means for designating at least one client or job for at least one of the plurality of paper supply means such that one paper supply means is dedicated for one client or job,” at column 9, lines 23-54, and concludes that:

“Therefore, it would have been obvious to a person of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention were made to include the teachings of Reilly with the teaching of Takimoto to arbitrate the printing of the print jobs corresponding to the job information stored in the print queue.”

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Applicant submits that there is no basis in col. 9, lines 23-54 of the Reilly reference for such a position. Rather, col. 9, lines 23-54 of the Reilly reference actually discusses that:

The print queue 82 contains job information for all of the print jobs that have an outstanding print request to the printer 40 for any of the host computers 400.sub.0 . . . n on the network. A print job request call is one example of the process for enabling communication with the print queue 82. Prior to sending a print job with a print job request call, the host computer sends a print request and a job ID is returned. When the print request is accepted, the job information is placed in the print queue 82. The parameters of the print job request call may include information about the print job and information for enabling the printer to notify the host computer when the job data can be accepted. When the printers are ready to capture the print job data, the printer may initiate a transmit job call which tells the host computer to start transmitting the print job to the printer. As print jobs are completed, their job information is removed from the print queue and entered into a job log. The job information in the print queue 82 may include the job name, the estimated time to print, the document status, the number of pages in the document, the number of pages left to print, the image content, the user comment, the media, and the creator application. The print job request call may provide this information and this information must be presented with the job in order to display the job information.

The print queue 82 may also be manipulated by an operator from a local or remote user interface. Examples of queue manipulation commands include interrupt, resume, delete and reorder. In addition, queue manipulation may allow a user to change the job priority and sorting algorithms. For instance, a job sorting algorithm may print all jobs requiring a particular media, such as transparencies first and then, after changing the media, and all print jobs needing the newly loaded media may be printed. (Emphasis added.)

Applicant submits that the cited portion of the Reilly reference does not disclose that a plurality of paper supply means, much less that at least one client/job is designated for one on the paper supply means such that it is dedicated for that client/job. Instead, Reilly relates to manipulation of a print queue to allow a user to change the job priority. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully submits, that claim 4 is not obvious over the cited references since these references fail to teach or suggest "designating means for designating at least one client or job for at least one of the plurality of paper supply means such that one paper supply means is dedicated for one client or job," as required by claim 4.

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Applicant also submits that the cited references provide no motivation to combine the Takimoto reference with the Reilly reference, and that absent Applicant's discoveries there would be no motivation to modify the Takimoto reference. That motivation is provided only by the present application, and is not provided by the cited references.

Accordingly, for at least the reasons stated above, Applicant respectfully submits that claim 4 is patentable over the cited references. Applicant further submits that dependent claims 5-7 are at least patentable as per the patentability of independent claim 4 from which they depend.

Applicant further submits that independent claim 8 is also patentable for at least the same reasons. Applicant further submits that dependent claims 9-11 are also patentable at least per the patentability of independent claim 8 from which they depend, respectively.

Newly Added Claims 15-18

New claim 15 relates to a network printer responsive to print requests from clients connected to a network. The network printer includes:

a plurality of paper supplies;
means for dedicating at least one of said paper supplies for a print job of a particular client based on a request from said particular client,
wherein printing from the paper supply dedicated to the particular client is reserved for a period of time such that others of said clients are prevented from executing print jobs using the dedicated paper supply during the period of time.

Applicant submits that claim 15 is patentable over the cited references since those references fails to teach or suggest, for example, "printing from the paper supply dedicated to the particular client is reserved for a period of time such that others of said clients are prevented from executing print jobs using the dedicated paper supply during the period of time," as required by claim 15. Claims 16-18 are also patentable at least by virtue of their dependency from claim 15, and also because those claims recite additional novel features that are not disclosed by the cited references.

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that the application is in condition for allowance. Reexamination and reconsideration of the application, as amended, are requested.

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If for any reason the Examiner finds the application other than in condition for allowance, the Examiner is requested to call the undersigned attorney at the Los Angeles, California telephone number (213) 337-6793 to discuss the steps necessary for placing the application in condition for allowance.

If there are any fees due in connection with the filing of this response, please charge the fees to our Deposit Account No. 50-1314.

Respectfully submitted,
HOGAN & HARTSON L.L.P.

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By: Erin P. Madill

Erin P. Madill
Registration No. 46,893
Attorney for Applicant(s)

500 South Grand Avenue, Suite 1900
Los Angeles, California 90071
Phone: 213-337-6700
Fax: 213-337-6701